



# WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS. WEATHERING THE STORM OF FAMILY CONFLICT

2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

April 4, 2018 • Quest Conference Center

**Amy Armstrong, LISW-S**  
The Center for Family Resolution

Amy Armstrong has worked with parents and families since 1996 as a parent educator, Certified Parent Coach®, mediator, independently licensed social worker in private practice, and most recently as a court-appointed parenting coordinator. She co-founded The Center for Family Resolution in Central Ohio in 2015 and works extensively with court-ordered clients.

Working together with legal professionals and other clinicians, Amy often serves as part of a team to support families. As a clinician with the Overcoming Barriers residential camp in Vermont, Amy provides therapeutic interventions for families experiencing the complex dynamic of child(ren) resisting contact with a parent during or after a high-conflict divorce.

Amy is active on the Family Law Reform Implementation committee of the Ohio Supreme Court, recent past president of the Central Ohio Academy of Collaborative Divorce Professionals, and is immediate Past-President of the Ohio Chapter of AFCC. She is a frequent speaker and leads trainings for professionals involved in family conflict, including topics of parental alienation, infidelity, parenting coordination, family mediation, and court-involved interventions for high conflict families. She earned her B.S. Degree in Education from Miami University of Ohio and her MSW from The Ohio State University College of Social Work.

**Monica Christofferson, JD**  
Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court, Domestic Violence Department

Monica Christofferson graduated in 2007 with her B.A. in political science from John Carroll University and 2010 from Catholic University, Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. She has worked for Domestic Relations Court in Cuyahoga County for the past five years creating the Domestic Violence Department which she now directs. Prior to that experience, she worked at the Battered Women's Shelter for Summit and Media County doing emergency and long term case management for victims of domestic violence. Ms. Christofferson has presented to a wide audience on all issues surrounding Civil Protections orders from implementing policies to enforcement of orders including but not limited to the AFCC, Municipal Prosecutors Association, Supreme Court of Ohio and CMBA.

## Dr. Frank Ezzo

Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Diagnostic Clinic

Dr. Ezzo is the Associate Director of Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Diagnostic Clinic. Previously, Dr. Ezzo was the Director of Family Evaluation Services in Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court. He is cofounder of the Institute for the Study of Interpersonal Violence and was a consultant in the Diagnostic Clinic in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court. Dr. Ezzo is Board Certified in Couple and Family Psychology, and Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology (American Board of Professional Psychology), and is Past President of the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology; he is also an adjunct faculty in the Department of Psychology at Kent State University. He has made national presentations in the areas of juvenile risk assessment, allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, and child maltreatment. He has published articles in peer reviewed journals in child maltreatment focusing on parental risk and protective factors, use of the Jesness Inventory in identifying oppositional and defiant children/adolescents, in comparison to adolescents with conduct disorders, and he has conducted research comparing MMPI-2-RF profiles in high conflict divorces with cases involving termination of parental rights.

He is currently involved in a research project at Northwestern University where his semi-actuarial instrument for risk and protective factors in child maltreatment is being further validated. Dr. Ezzo has testified in over 100 cases involving child maltreatment, allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, and termination of parental rights. In July 2011 he was appointed to the American Psychological Association's Council of Specialties representing the specialty of Couple and Family Psychology. Dr. Ezzo received the Ohio Psychological Association's Distinguished Psychologist Award for 2012 for his clinical and research contributions and advocacy with children, adolescents, and families. In 2013 he was elected a Fellow in the American Psychological Association for his contributions to psychology on a national level, and presented a Fellow's Address at the American Psychological Association's Annual Meeting in August 2014. In June 2014 he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts and was appointed chair of the Educational Committee. The American Psychological Association, Division 43, Society for Couple and Family Psychology awarded Dr. Ezzo the 2017 Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Ezzo has participated in a National Institute of Mental Health research project on pediatric bipolar disorders. His clinical interests involve the treatment of children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families using evidence-based practices; with a special interest in the role of expressed emotion within the family in maintaining or alleviating the symptoms of a family member.

## Magistrate Rosalind C. Florez

Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, Dispute Resolution Center

Magistrate Florez has served as a magistrate in Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court since November 2006. She was appointed Director of the Dispute Resolution Center of the Domestic Relations Court September 2, 2015. In March 2016, Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor appointed Mag. Florez for a three-year term to the

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Advisory Committee on Language Services. She serves on the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution Subcommittee on Education, Training and Experience for Mediation. She is also a board member for the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts since 2015. Magistrate Florez began mediating in 1999 when the Ohio Supreme Court funded common pleas court projects to provide another means to resolve litigation. She trained Hamilton County area attorneys when the Uniform Mediation Act was enacted. She is a faculty member for the Ohio Supreme Court on family law mediation, Early Neutral Evaluation and parenting coordination. Mag. Florez received a bachelor of science in Journalism from Ohio University and a juris doctor from the University of Cincinnati.

### Erinn McKee Hannigan, JD

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Erinn McKee Hannigan is an Honors College graduate of Ball State University and received Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Erinn is a bit unique in that she chose to attend law school for the sole purpose of becoming a domestic relations attorney. Upon graduation, she kept true to her goal and practices exclusively in domestic relations. Erinn works hard to help guide her clients towards their new normal. She works not only within the court system in litigation but aids her clients in various forms of alternative dispute resolution practices as well. Erinn was trained in family law arbitration in North Carolina in 2004; collaborative practice in 2008; and mediation in 2011. Erinn began mediating domestic relations cases as a mediator in 2017. She practices and provides mediation services to clients in Hamilton, Warren, Clermont and Butler counties in Ohio.

Erinn served as the co-chair of the Cincinnati Academy of Collaborative Professionals and continues to serve on the board of that organization. Erinn is a member of the Domestic Relations Section of the Cincinnati Bar Association, the Ohio Bar Association, the North Carolina Bar Association, the Association of Family and Conciliatory Courts and the International Association of Collaborative Professionals. Erinn is consistently named as a Super Lawyer in Ohio since 2007. She was even named as one of the Top 25 Women Lawyers in Cincinnati in 2016.

### Julie Kenniston, MSW, LISW

Fox Valley Technical College, National Criminal Justice Training Program

Julie Kenniston is a Program Manager for the National Criminal Justice Training Program of Fox Valley Technical College. She presents nationally and internationally on forensic interviewing. She is a faculty member for the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) and Ohio Attorney General's Finding Words forensic interview courses. Ms. Kenniston coordinated the Forensic Training Institute for The Childhood Trust and now manages the updated Child Forensic Interviewing program. She co-chairs the APSAC forensic interviewer committee and chairs the committee updating guidelines regarding the use of interview aids in forensic interviews. She has conducted over 3,000 forensic interviews and currently conducts interviews for the Southwest Ohio ICAC Task Force. Ms. Kenniston co-authored *Handbook on Questioning Children: A Linguistic Perspective, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition* with Anne Graffam Walker, PhD.

## Kimberly A. Kent, MSW, LISW-S

Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, Dispute Resolution Department

Kimberly Kent is the Hamilton County supervisor of the Dispute Resolution Department in Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, overseeing a staff of eight employees. Her practice focuses on court ordered child custody evaluations/investigations, mediation, and Early Neutral Evaluation sessions. Kimberly regularly testifies in contested custody cases, helps facilitate parenting classes for co-parents, and serves on the Hamilton County Fatality Review Board. She is a licensed mediator and has completed all of her necessary hours of training. In addition she has served as a volunteer for the Supreme Court of Ohio's Basic Mediation sessions. Kimberly has completed the Parenting Coordination and Guardian ad Litem training programs. Prior to joining the court, Kimberly was a Program Director at the Council on Child Abuse of Southern Ohio, Inc. She designed curriculums for school based safety programs, facilitated support groups for adult survivors of abuse and was a spokesperson for the United Way. She is a graduate of Michigan State University and the University of Kentucky.

## Honorable Stephen Michael

Jackson County Probate and Juvenile Court

Judge Stephen D. Michael has served the Jackson County Probate and Juvenile Courts since 1991. This was preceded by 11 years in the private practice of law in Jackson County, Ohio. Judge Michael graduated from the Ohio Northern University Petit College of law in 1978 and previously received his B.A. from Ohio University.

During his tenure on the bench he has served as President of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Judges and is currently a member of the Executive Committee and the Policy and Procedure Committee of that organization. Further he has served two terms as a trustee of the Ohio Judicial College, as a member of the Ohio Probate Judges Policy and Procedure Committee. Judge Michael has also served on the Board of Directors of the Hocking Valley Community Residential Center for 20 years.

Recently he has been chosen to serve as a member of board of the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. The Judge has also served on many committees and workgroups including the Ohio Supreme Court Committee to design a working curriculum for the systematic training of Ohio's Juvenile Judges and the Governors Council on Juvenile Justice.

## Bobbie Corley O'Keefe, JD

O'Keefe Family Law

Bobbie Corley O'Keefe is a family law attorney who has been in the private practice of law for more than 25 years. She is a member of the Columbus Bar Association and its Family Law Committee, the Ohio State Bar Association and its Family Law Committee, Central Ohio Academy of Collaborative Divorce Professionals (past-President and serving in different capacities on the Board of Directors), Ohio Mediation Association, Women Lawyers of Franklin County, the International Academy for Collaborative Law Professionals. *continued*

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She is Secretary of the Board of Trustees for the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. In addition, she is in the process of becoming a Certified Parent Coach® with Parent Coach International.

Ms. O’Keefe focuses her community service activities on efforts related to the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders and is a member of the board of the Prevention Action Alliance (formerly Drug Free Action Alliance). Ms. O’Keefe has been a frequent speaker for the local and state bar on collaborative law and alternative dispute resolution techniques in child custody and divorce. She earned her B.A. degree from Miami University of Ohio and her J.D. degree from Capital University Law School.

## Honorable Diane M. Palos

Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court

Judge Palos serves on the Cuyahoga Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations. She previously served as a Magistrate and Referee in that court. She was the 2016-17 President of the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges (OADRJ) and served from 2016 to 2017 as the Chair of the Ohio Judicial College Board of Trustees.

Judge Palos chaired the planning committee for the Ohio Domestic Relations Summit in 2014. She was appointed by the Chief Justice to the Task Force on Access to Justice in 2014. She serves on the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on the Rules of Superintendence and the Committee on Case Management. She is the co-chair of the Ohio Judicial Conference Law & Procedure Committee for Domestic Relations. Previously, she served on the Supreme Court of Ohio Advisory Committee on Children, Families, and the Courts from 2002 to 2008, and on the Ohio Judicial College Board of Trustees from 2005 to 2009. Judge Palos has been a faculty planner for continuing legal education for judges and magistrates in Ohio since 1987. She served by appointment on the Ohio Child Support Guidelines Council, from 1999 to 2001 and as a proxy to Ohio Child Support Guidelines Council from 1995 to 1997.

She has been an executive officer and member of the Board of Trustees for The Center for Principled Family Advocacy since 2000. She was a founding member of the Center and has planned and facilitated many of the CLE presentations since its establishment.

Judge Palos worked as an adjunct professor at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law for 21 years. She taught various courses including Advanced Legal Writing with a Family Law focus, Legal Writing, Family Law, and Bar Strategies and Tactics from 1989 to 2009. Judge Palos is the author of Chapter 19, Child Support, Sowald Morganstern Domestic Relations Law and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for the Domestic Relations Journal of Ohio.

## Magistrate Jeremy Richards

Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court

Magistrate Jeremy Richards has served as a magistrate in Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court since January 2, 2014. Prior to his appointment to the bench he maintained a private law practice primarily in the areas of criminal defense and small business litigation. He began his legal career in 2001 with the firm Coley & Associates practicing

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exclusively Uniform Commercial Code Article 2A law. He worked as a clerk for the Honorable Thomas Crush on the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas – General Division from 1998 to 2001. Prior to that he worked in corporate finance for Wendy’s International, Inc. and Bath and Body Works, Inc. in Columbus. Magistrate Richards received a bachelor of science degree in Finance from The Ohio State University in 1990 and a juris doctor from the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University in 2001.

## Alexandria M. Ruden, JD

Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Alexandria Ruden is a senior attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, specializing in domestic violence representation, since 1984. She is a member of the Ohio Supreme Court Domestic Violence Advisory Committee; Family Violence Prevention Center Advisory Council/ Office of Criminal Justice Services; Ohio Supreme Court Sub-Committee on Abuse, Neglect and Dependency of the Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts; Cuyahoga County/City of Cleveland Domestic Violence Collaboration Board; Cuyahoga County Domestic Violence Shelter Advisory Board; Cuyahoga County Violence Against Women Act Allocations Committee; Family Justice Center Executive Committee; Defending Childhood Governing Board; State-wide Legal Services Family Law Task Force; and Statewide STOP Implementation Committee. Ms. Ruden was appointed by Administrative Judge Diane M. Palos to serve on a delegation representing the Cuyahoga County region at the 2014 Ohio Domestic Relations Summit: Maximizing Resources, Minimizing Conflict for Children and Families. Of note is the publication of *Ohio Domestic Law* for Thomson Reuters, which Alexandria co-authored with Judge Ronald Adrine.

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